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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 004002

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DEPARTMENT FOR SRAP, SCA/FO, SCA/A, EUR/RPM, INR/B
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TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: BAMYAN PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR SARABI ON HER
MINISTERIAL PROSPECTS

Classified By: Interagency Provincial Affairs Coordinator Scott Kilner
for Reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Despite rumors about possible cabinet-level positions, Bamyan Provincial Governor Habiba Sarabi confided to Bamyan Provincial Reconstruction Team representatives that, unless offered something higher profile than Minister of Social Affairs, she intends to remain in her current position. Directorate of Local Governance Director General Ghulam Jelani Popal continues to encourage Sarabi to remain as governor and continue her good work.⁸ Although willing to remain in Bamyan, Sarabi emphasized that she would only do so if Second Vice President Karim Khalili, his relatives and associates stopped harassing her. Her transition to a GIROA leadership position in Kabul, if it were to happen, could affect the positive progress she is leading in Bamyan. End Summary.

SARABI SEEKS CHANCE TO MAKE REAL CHANGES

¶2. (C) Bamyan Governor Sarabi this week informed Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) representatives about her prospects in President Karzai's new ministerial line-up. Scoffing at rumors that she could be nominated for Second Vice President, Sarabi confirmed that she is still slated to be Minister of Social Affairs. However, she stated clearly that she will not accept this position because it is marginalized and under-resourced. Preferring a well-funded, high profile ministry that would provide a chance to make real changes⁸ on the national scene, she indicated interest in the ministries of Higher Education, Health, and Information and Culture.

. . . OR COULD REMAIN BAMYAN GOVERNOR, BUT CONDITIONALLY

¶3. (C) If not selected for one of these ministries, Sarabi confided that she would likely remain Governor of Bamyan to continue what I started.⁸ She also mentioned Balkh and Kabul governorships as alternative possibilities, but noted that Independent Directorate of Local Governance Director General Ghulam Jelani Popal advised her not to expect either position. Three times, Sarabi said (somewhat proudly), Popal told her most recently: "We want you to continue the good works you started . . . you have brought stability to the province."⁸

¶4. (C) Although willing to remain in Bamyan, Sarabi emphasized that she would only do so if Second Vice President Karim Khalili, his relatives and associates stopped harassing her. According to Sarabi, they are responsible for staged protests, night letters, and other forms of political harassment over the past five years. If she continues as Governor, she said, she would also demand the removal of Deputy Governor Fahimi, a Khalili ally, who is in Sarabi's

view also ineffective and possibly corrupt.

PROVINCIAL BUDGETING PLANS NOT YET SUBMITTED

15. (C) Sarabi also told PRTOFFs that none of the ministries have contacted her requesting provincial plans as part of the central budgeting process. Although the deadline for submission was mid-November, Sarabi appeared unconcerned and asserted she would have the line directors focus on this following the annual Provincial Reporting Conference December 6-8. She complained, however, that both Agriculture and Education Ministries were &extremely weak8 in planning and accountability, and staffs not well trained.

16. (C) Comment: Palace Chief of Staff Omer Daudzai told us December 10 that, in order to save face when communicating with undesired ministerial candidates, the palace is making disingenuous offers to candidates that it knows will be unacceptable to them. For example, Daudzai said the palace was thinking of dividing the Culture and Youth Affairs Ministry, and offering current Minister Abdul Karim Khoram just the Culture Ministry. This would be considered a downgrade for him since it would only be half of his current ministry, so he would not likely accept it. Therefore, they could say "Khoram refused8 instead of having to admit they did not want Khoram.

17. (C) Comment, continued: Governor Sarabi, supported by a fairly effective Chief of Police, is considered strong and popular in Bamyan. Her transition to a GIROA leadership position in Kabul, if it were to happen, could affect the

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progress underway in the province, but that would depend on caliber of her successor. Conditions in Bamyan are considered favorable and largely sustainable. While Sarabi's departure poses some downside risk at the provincial level, her leadership talents could potentially be put to even greater use at the national level. End comment.
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